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ABSTRACT

Group- and self-identity are issues that have concerned sociologists and psychologists over time. Although the importance of group attitudes has been well established theoretically as an element in self-evaluations, empirical evidence has lagged. To investigate the relationship between racial and gender stereotypes and self-concept, black (N=51) and white (N=66) college students were asked to describe self, black, white and Asian Americans, women and men. They also rated 84 adjectives on a favorability scale. Results showed differences in social stereotypes of black and white students. The highest favorability scores were associated with self ratings, while the least favorable stereotype was that held of white Americans. Women had higher favorability scores than men. In general, the findings suggest that social stereotypes are related to self-concept, but the extent of this relationship depends on the type of social stereotype assessed, the dimensions of self-concept studied, and the race and sex of subjects measured. (Author/JAC)

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Social Stereotypes and Self Concept

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Social Stereotypes and Self Concept

Group and self-identity is an issue that has concerned many sociologists and psychologists for a number of years. The importance of group attitudes has been well established theoretically as an element in self-evaluations, however, empirical evidence has lagged behind theory. Most researchers have investigated own race attitudes with the belief that they are related to self-attitudes. The "black self-hatred doctrine" emerged from past data gathered on group attitudes and assumptions made about self-evaluations. Since the 1970s, the research focus has shifted from racial group identity to sex role orientation (Bem, 1974), attitudes (Spence, Helmreich & Stapp, 1973), stereotypes (Williams & Best, 1977), and identity (Turner & Turner, 1974a); another dimension of group and self identity. Although the content of either racial or gender stereotypes has been assessed, favorability has been investigated by only a few in the areas of racial (Karlins, Coffman & Walters, 1969; Katz & Braly, 1935) and sex-role stereotypes (Williams & Best, 1977; Wolff & Taylor, 1979). Williams and Best (1977) studied favorability of male and female stereotypes but found no differences on this dimension while Wolff and Taylor (1979) found that male stereotypes were more favorable than female stereotypes. Both racial and gender attitudes are representative of group attitudes and there is still a need to establish a relationship between these group and self attitudes, especially for those of different racial groups.

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the relationship between racial and gender stereotypes and self concept in black and white

college students. It focused on the content and favorability of these stereotypes and their relationships to a measure of general and area specific self concept.

Method

Subjects

Subjects were 51 black and 66 white college students attending universities in the Southeast. They were members of the majority racial group in their respective universities. There were 71 females and 46 males with a mean age of 19 years 8 months. The white students were upper middle class, and the black students were middle class as assessed by the Hollingshead Index of Social Position (Hollingshead, 1957). Students were participants in an Introduction to Psychology subject pool at their respective universities.

Procedure

Subjects were administered the Katz and Braly Scale (1933) in a group session by a same-race experimenter. They were instructed to read through the list of 84 adjectives and select five that were most descriptive of themselves. They repeated this process and chose five adjectives which best described black Americans, white Americans, Asian Americans, women and men in this order. They were then instructed to read through the 84 adjectives and rate each one on its degree of favorability, as it is normally used to describe people. They responded by using a Likert Scale from 5 (favorable) to 1 (unfavorable). They were then administered the Tennessee Self Concept Test (Fitts, 1965).

Results

Stereotypes

The five most frequently chosen adjectives for self, black, white, and Asian Americans, women and men were calculated separately for black and white students (see Table 1).

Insert Table 1 About Here

Black and white students held the common stereotype of black Americans as loyal to family ties and very religious and described white Americans as materialistic, industrious, and conservative. In addition, white students described black Americans as aggressive and lazy, while black students described white Americans as deceitful, sly and shrewd. Asian Americans were described as loyal to family ties and ambitious by all students.

Women were described as intelligent, sensitive, and talkative, while men were thought to be intelligent, ambitious and aggressive by all students. In addition, blacks chose to describe women as loyal to family ties and sophisticated and men as sportsmanlike and stubborn, while whites described women as kind and passionate and men as industrious and practical. Black and white students described themselves as intelligent, sensitive, honest and kind.

Favorability

Favorability scores for the 84 adjectives of the Katz and Braly scale were calculated and used to compute the mean favorability score of the five adjectives chosen to describe self and the racial and gender groups. A 2(sex) by 2(race) x 6(group) ANOVA with repeated measures on the six group

favorability scores was calculated. A significant trial effect was found, $F(5, 550) = 40.7$, $p < .000$ along with a significant race by trial interaction, $F(5, 550) = 7.34$, $p < .001$. Table 2 shows the mean favorability scores for the race by sex groups for the self, and group ratings. The highest favorability scores were associated with the self ratings of black and white students ($\bar{X} = 4.01$) while the least favorable stereotype was that held of white Americans ($\bar{X} = 3.29$). Women ($\bar{X} = 3.74$) were viewed more favorably than men ($\bar{X} = 3.43$) and Asian Americans ($\bar{X} = 3.75$) had a higher mean favorability score than both black ($\bar{X} = 3.41$) and white Americans ($\bar{X} = 3.28$).

Insert Table 2 About Here

A one way ANOVA with repeated measures on the favorability scores for self and four group ratings (excluding Asian Americans) was calculated. Results indicated a significant main effect for race, $F(1, 115) = 3.93$, $p < .05$, a significant trial effect, $F(4, 460) = 53.08$, $p < .000$, and race by trial interaction, $F(4, 460) = 10.67$, $p < .000$. Figure 1 charts the five mean favorability scores for the black and white students. Overall, the white students held more favorable stereotypes ($\bar{X} = 3.61$) than the black students ($\bar{X} = 3.50$), the self ratings ($\bar{X} = 4.01$) were more favorable than the group ratings, and the gender stereotypes (women, $\bar{X} = 3.73$; men, $\bar{X} = 3.41$) were more favorable than racial stereotypes (black, $\bar{X} = 3.41$; white, $\bar{X} = 3.25$).

Insert Figure 1 About Here

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Self Concept and Stereotypes

Subjects were divided into high and low self concept groups by using the mean total P score reported in the TSCS manual ($\bar{X}$ = 346). Separate 2(concept) x 2(race) x 2(sex) ANOVAS were performed on the group favorability scores. There were significant main effects for self concept, $F(1, 109) = 5.82$, $p < .001$, race, $F(1, 109)$ 6.72, $p < .01$, and a significant self concept by sex interaction, $F(1, 109) = 8.70$, $p < .04$ on the favorability scores for men. The most favorable stereotypes of men were held by males with high self concept and white students

Table 3 presents the Pearson correlations for mean favorability for self, racial and gender group ratings together with the 10 scores obtained from the TSCS. This is presented separately for the black and white subjects.

Insert Table 3 About Here

When looking at the correlations between the favorability scores and the TSCS scores, some interesting trends are seen. The self ratings of the black students were correlated with only one dimension of the TSCS--physical self while the self ratings of the white students were correlated with 5 TSCS scores: total P, identity, behavior, physical, and social self.

The own race favorability ratings of the black students were correlated with 7 of the 10 TSCS scores: total p, identity, acceptance, behavior, physical, personal, and family self. In contrast, the own-race favorability ratings of the white students were correlated with only behavior and moral self. The other-race favorability ratings (white Americans) of black students

were correlated with 4 TSCS scores: total P, acceptance, physical, and social self while the other race ratings (black Americans) of the white students were positively correlated with moral self and negatively with criticism.

Just as the relationship between the racial stereotypes and the TSCS differed for black and white students, a similar racial difference was evident between the gender stereotypes and the TSCS. The favorability ratings for women by the black students were not correlated with any of the 10 TSCS scores. However, for the white students the favorability ratings of women were correlated with 6 TSCS scores: total P, identity, behavior, moral, personal, and family selves. The black students' favorability ratings of males were positively correlated with 9 of the 10 TSCS scores, excluding only the self-criticism scores while the white students' ratings of men were correlated with 5 TSCS scores: total P, identity, behavior, moral self, and criticism.

Discussion

The content of the self ratings for black and white students were almost identical. College students in general seem to view themselves as intelligent, honest, sensitive, ambitious and kind. However, when one looks at the relationship between the self ratings and the Tennessee Self Concept scores it appears that the self-ratings of white students are consistent with their self concepts, nevertheless, there is great inconsistency for the black students. This data suggests that some black students were rating themselves more favorably than their self concepts indicated. This may be a function of social desirability and/or the checklist technique.

One wonders if the black students are rating their "ideal self" instead of the "real self."

The black and white students differed on the content of their ratings of black Americans, nevertheless, the favorability of these ratings were not significant. What has happened over the years is that white and black students have increasingly adhered to more favorable stereotypes of black Americans. The present data support this trend. Racial differences are much more significant for the ratings of white Americans. Black students view white Americans in a less favorable manner. These findings are consistent with studies run during the early 1970s.

These racial group ratings were more related to the self concept of black than white students. The more positive that black students felt about themselves the more favorably they rated both black and white Americans. The lack of a similar pattern for the white students suggests that their own-race ratings are quite independent of their self ratings. However, the black students' self concept is related to the favorability of their racial stereotypes.

Black and white students appear to agree on their ratings of women in both content and favorability. Women are described as intelligent, sensitive and talkative which is similar to other research findings. Previous research has revealed a high consensus between the sexes on the content of the stereotypes of women (Broverman, 1972, Williams & Best, 1977). The favorability scores for women are higher than those for the other groups rated. However, there were racial differences in the correlational data. The white students' ratings of women were positively related to their self

concepts and this was not true for the black subjects. Instead, black students held favorable stereotypes of women regardless of the nature of their self-concepts. The data on the favorability scores for men are much more conclusive. Men were viewed as intelligent, ambitious and aggressive, as found in previous research (Broverman, 1972, Leuptow, 1980; Williams & Best, 1977), but their stereotypes were less favorable than those for women. Black students held a less favorable view of men than white students, which is consistent with the results from Turner and Turner (1974b) who found that black females evaluated males more negatively than white females. In the present study, black females held the least favorable stereotype of men.

The view of white women as "Pollyannas" was not substantiated by this study. Turner and Turner (1974b) found that white females evaluated men more positively than their own-sex group and interpreted this to be indicative of differential socialization of males and females with females socialized to view males in a positive manner. Although white females in the present sample held more favorable stereotypes of men than black females, they also held the most favorable stereotype of women which is contradictory to Wolff and Turner (1979) who found that male stereotypes were more favorable than female stereotypes.

Those students with high self concept scores held more favorable stereotypes of men than low self concept students. Females with low self concepts held the least favorable stereotypes of males. These data suggest that one's self-evaluations are related to the evaluations of men, which is contrary to Spence, Helmreich and Stapp (1975) who found no relationship between social self esteem and male or female stereotype ratings. This

finding supports the importance of men in our society and the status held by them. The implication for black females is great, since their self concepts are positively related to both their own-race favorability ratings and their ratings of men. These findings would support previous theories that hold the belief that black women suffer from the "double whammy" (race and sex discrimination). It does appear that their own self evaluations take into account their racial and sex-group attitudes.

In summary, there are differences in social stereotypes of black and white college students. Gender stereotypes appear to be more favorable than racial stereotypes while self ratings are more favorable than group ratings. The own-race favorability ratings of black students are significantly related to their self concepts, which is not true for white students. The favorability ratings of men are related to the self concepts of both black and white students. In general, social stereotypes are related to self concept but the extent of this relationship is dependent upon the type of social stereotype assessed, the dimensions of self concept studied, and the race and sex of subjects measured.

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Table 1
Self Ratings and Stereotypes of Racial and Gender Groups

by black and white students
(in percent)

	Intelligent	Honest	Sensitive	Ambitious	Kind	Individualistic	Loyal to Family Ties	Materialistic	Very Religious	Aggressive	Progressive	Lazy	Deceitful	Sly	Shrewd	Industrious	Conservative	Conventional	Scientifically	Tradition Loving	Reserved	Quiet	Sophisticated	Talkative	Passionate	Sportsmanlike	Stubborn	Practical
Self																												
Black	65	35	33	27	23																							
White	45	36	35		24	30																						
Black American																												
Black	46			21			25	23	23																			
White							26		18	27	18	18																
White American																												
Black	35							31					33	23	17	17	17											
White				30				68								26	23	24										
Asian American																												
Black	48			21			36												25	23								
White				23			33									39					35	26						
Women																												
Black	43	35					19																31	21				
White	33	35		24																				21	23			
Men																												
Black	44			33						29																21	29	
White	26			38						48						27												24

Table 2

Mean Favorability Ratings for Self, Racial and Gender Groups

	Male		Female		
	White	Black	White	Black	Total
Self	3.97	4.07	4.01	4.02	4.01
Black American	3.20	3.60	3.38	3.51	3.41
White American	3.40	3.05	3.52	3.00	3.28
Asian American	3.76	3.93	3.71	3.67	3.75
Women	3.72	3.62	3.81	3.75	3.74
Men	3.53	3.39	3.53	3.26	3.43
Total	3.60	3.61	3.66	3.54	3.60
N	27	18	39	30	114

Table 3

Correlations for Self-concept and Favorability Scores, Black and White Subjects

	Mean Favorability Scores											
	Self		Black		White		Asian		Women		Men	
	B	W	B	W	B	W	B	W	B	W	B	W
P Score	.18	.24*	.3*	.06	.27*	.19	.24*	.04	.07	.33**	.32*	.21*
Identity	.18	.30**	.26*	.04	.20	.15	.10	-.01	-.00	.24*	.34**	.22*
Acceptance	.16	.09	.27*	.04	.28*	.09	.28*	.04	.12	.20	.24*	.12
Behavior	.14	.27*	.26*	.09	.20	.21*	.20	.07	.03	.42***	.28*	.21*
Physical	.29*	.38***	.25*	-.0	.24*	.16	.20	.08	.12	.13	.26*	.19
Moral	.20	.19	.14	.25*	.18	.26*	-.04	.13	.08	.37***	.27*	.26*
Personal	.22	.14	.35**	-.04	.13	.05	.38**	-.05	-.06	.27*	.25*	.16
Family	.12	-.0	.26	.12	.21	.10	.22	.06	.05	.27*	.30*	.10
Social	-.09	.22*	.22	-.12	.27*	.13	.06	-.07	.16	.20	.32*	.10
Criticism	-.13	.03	.07	-.31**	-.17	-.10	-.16	-.10	.12	-.16	.14	-.28*

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

Figure 1. Mean favorability scores for ratings of self, black and white Americans, women and men, by black and white students.

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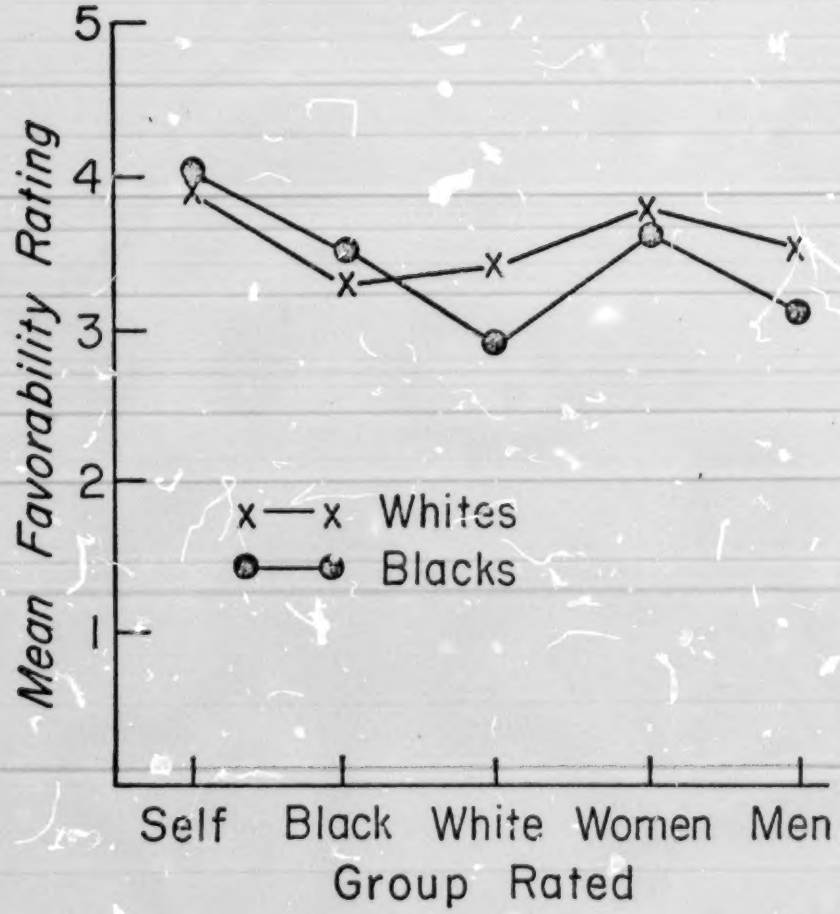
5
4
3
2
1
Mean Favorability Rating
x—x Whites
Blacks
Self
Black
White
Women
Men
Group Rated